

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCLANT NORVOLK

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SUBJECT: AZOREAN LEADER DISCUSSES AUTONOMY MOVEMENT

REF: A) PONTA DELGADA 440 DTG 201207Z NOV 75;

B) PONTA DELGADA 435 DTG 170520Z NOV 75

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER JOAO BOSCO MOTA AMARAL, SOON-TO-BE-COMPLETED STATUTE OF AUTONOMY FOR AZORES WILL ESTABLISH MODIFIED PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR ISLANDS. MOTA AMARAL WAS PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF NOV 17

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ISLAND-WIDE DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE REGIONAL JUNTA

AND THE PROGRESS TO DATE OF THE AUTONOMY MOVEMENT. BARRING A SHARP POLITICAL SHIFT--EITHER TO THE LEFT OR RIGHT-- THE MODERATE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WHICH MOTA AMARAL REPRESENTS APPEARS CONTENT TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT POLICY OF STRENGTHENING REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS, WHILE RESERVING JUDGMENT ON THE ULTIMATE QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE VERSUS AUTONOMY. END SUMMARY

1. STATUTE OF AUTONOMY: IN FRANK CONVERSATION IN PONTA DELGADA NOV 19 WITH CONSUL AND VISITING EMBOFF, POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) LEADER JOAO BOSCO MOTA AMARAL COMMENTED ON CURRENT AZOREAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID THAT NINE-MEMBER DRAFTING COMMITTEE, OF WHICH HE WAS PART, HOPED TO FINISH ITS WORK WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS ON A COMPREHENSIVE STATUTE OF AUTONOMY FOR THE ISLANDS (REF A). THE STATUTE WOULD IN EFFECT BE A "CONSTITUTION" FOR THE AZORES. THE TASK HAD BEEN MADE EASIER BY LIFTING WHOLE SECTIONS FROM THE DRAFT NATIONAL CONSTITUTION PREPARED PREVIOUSLY BY PPD IN LISBON. AFTER THE STATUTE DRAFT WAS COMPLETED, IT WOULD BE PUBLISHED AND PUBLIC COMMENTS WOULD BE INVITED. PUBLIC MEETINGS WOULD BE HELD THROUGHOUT THE ISLANDS, AND THE DRAFT WOULD BE REVISED TO REFLECT POPULAR SENTIMENTS. THE REVISED STATUTE WOULD THEN BE SUBMITTED TO LISBON FOR APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION. HE ANTICIPATED NO RESISTANCE IN LISBON.

2. ORGANIZATION OF AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT: THE STATUTE DRAFTING COMMITTEE FAVORED A MODIFIED PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE ISLANDS. IN ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE AZORES, THE COMMITTEE WAS CONSIDERING TWO ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPTS. UNDER THE FIRST, A BICAMERAL SYSTEM SIMILAR TO THE U.S. MODEL WOULD BE ADOPTED. ONE CHAMBER WOULD BE BASED UPON POPULATION AND THE OTHER WOULD GIVE EQUAL WEIGHT TO EACH OF THE NINE ISLANDS. UNDER THE SECOND CONCEPT, A SINGLE CHAMBER WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WITH REPRESENTATION BASED UPON A PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION FORMULA TAKING INTO ACCOUNT BOTH POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHY. EACH ISLAND WOULD HAVE ONE REPRESENTATIVE PLUS ONE MORE FOR EACH 5,000 IN POPULATION OR PORTION THEREOF. THUS, THE SMALLEST ISLAND, CORVO, WOULD HAVE THE MINIMUM OF TWO REPRESENTATIVES WHILE THE LARGEST, SAN MIGUEL, WOULD HAVE 17 REPRESENTATIVES. NO SINGLE ISLAND WOULD HAVE ENOUGH REPRESENTATIVES TO GOVERN ALONE. THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE CURRENTLY FAVORED THE UNICAMERAL APPROACH.

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3. EXECUTIVE BRANCH: THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE WOULD BE SELECTED BY THE ASSEMBLY. MINISTERS, OR MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL AS IT WOULD PROBABLY BE CALLED, WOULD BE APPOINTED BY THE EXECUTIVE. IN SELECTING COUNCIL MEMBERS, THE EXECUTIVE WOULD FOLLOW A FORMULA WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE SOME REPRESENTATION TO EACH OF THE THREE MAJOR ISLAND GROUPINGS. IN A FURTHER BOW TO INTER-ISLAND RIVALRIES, THE PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE

GOVERNMENT WOULD ALSO BE DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE ARCHIPELAGO.

4. LISBON REPRESENTATIVE: THE NEW REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY A LISBON-BASED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE AZORES AND MADEIRA. THIS INDIVIDUAL WOULD BE AN AZOREAN AND HIS PRIMARY FUNCTION WOULD BE TO REPRESENT THE ISLANDS BEFORE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HIS FUNCTIONS WOULD RESEMBLE THOSE OF AN "AMBASSADOR" FROM THE ISLANDS TO THE MAINLAND.

5. LAW-MAKING AUTHORITY: THE AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE STATUTE WOULD HAVE LAW-MAKING AUTHORITY. IN CASES OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LAWS PASSED BY THE REGIONAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS, A CONFLICT COURT WOULD DECIDE THE MATTER. THE COURT WOULD BE COMPOSED OF TWO MEMBERS NOMINATED BY THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY; TWO BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN LISBON; AND ONE DRAWN FROM THE NATIONAL SUPREME COURT. MOTA AMARAL POINTED OUT THAT THE BODY OF JURISPRUDENCE ESTABLISHED BY DECISIONS OF THE CONFLICT COURT WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE "POLITICAL REALITIES". IF THEY WERE NOT, MOTA AMARAL POINTED OUT, "POLITICAL REALITIES WOULD INEVITABLY TAKE OVER".

6. EFFORTS TO INCREASE UNITY: THE STEPS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TOWARD AUTONOMY--E.G. CREATION OF REGIONAL JUNTA, DRAFTING OF STATUTE--HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO GREATER UNITY AMONG THE ISLANDS. THE ISLAND-WIDE DEMONSTRATIONS ON NOV 17 IN FAVOR OF THE REGIONAL JUNTA (REF B) WERE AN INDICATION OF THIS INCREASED UNITY. BUT, MOTA AMARAL ADDED, THE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE NOT AS MONOLITHIC AS THEY APPEARED. TRUE, THEY HAD A SINGLE COMMON THEME--SUPPORT FOR THE JUNTA--BUT THE SECONDARY THEMES HAD LITTLE IN COMMON. THEY RANGED FROM PARTISAN POLITICAL SLOGANEERING TO SUPPORT FOR PAROCHIAL CONCERNS. THE PPD WAS THE PRIME MOVER BUT THE AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) ALSO PLAYED A ROLE. IN TERCEIRA, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PPD LEADERSHIP HESITATED IN CALLING A DEMONSTRATION CONFIDENTIAL

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TION, AND THE FLA MOVED IN AND PREEMPTED THE ACTION.

7. WHO IS THE FLA?: MOTA AMARAL CONFIRMED THAT PRINCIPAL SUPPORT FOR THE FLA CAME FROM LARGE LAND OWNERS ON SAN MIGUEL. THE LARGE FARMERS HAVE ALSO ENLISTED A MEASURE OF SUPPORT AMONG SMALLER LAND HOLDERS. MOTA AMARAL SAID THE FLA ENJOYED SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT AMONG AZOREANS IN THE ISLANDS' ARMY GARRISON AS WELL. THE NOV 17 DEMONSTRATION POINTED UP DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE FLA. WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE ISSUE OF AUTONOMY VERSUS INDEPENDENCE, THEY WEREN'T SURE WHAT THEY WANTED. DESPITE ITS OBVIOUS SHORTCOMINGS, HOWEVER, THE FLA HAS BEEN A USEFUL TOOL WITH WHICH TO PRESSURE THE LISBON GOVERNMENT TO GIVE THE AZOREANS MORE EQUITABLE TREATMENT.

8. BASE NEGOTIATIONS: MOTA AMARAL STRESSED THAT AZOREANS MUST

PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN ANY FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS OF BASE RIGHTS AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL ALREADY UNDERSTOOD THIS.

9. COMMENT: MOTA AMARAL WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASE WITH BOTH THE RESULTS OF THE NOV 17 DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE OVERALL PROGRESS MADE TO DATE BY THE AUTONOMY MOVEMENT. HE APPEARED CONFIDENT THAT THE "MODERATE ELEMENTS" WHICH HE REPRESENTED, WERE IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION. BARRING A SHARP POLITICAL SHIFT ON THE MAINLAND--EITHER TO THE LEFT OR RIGHT--THE ISLANDS' MODERATE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP APPEARS CONTENT TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT POLICY OF STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY, WHILE RESERVING POSITION ON ULTIMATE QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE VS. AUTONOMY.
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